

## Award cull comes 'with no warning'

Chris Henwood  
@Chris\_Henwood

Surprise plans that could end government funding for around 1,600 qualifications might hit the job hopes of thousands of struggling learners, it has been claimed.

Graham Hastings-Evans, managing director of the National Open College Network (NOCN) awarding body, said he feared unemployed students could see courses stopped as a result of the plans, which he said had been unexpected.

"When we saw what the Skills Funding Agency was planning to do, and it's doing it quite quickly, we found that over a year this could affect up to 50,000 people," he said.

"These are generally learners at the lower credit levels, where qualifications are very much for people who are in difficulties and trying to get into employment or further education — the unemployed, for instance. "There may well be a good reason for it [ending funding], but it's never been explained to us. We weren't aware this was coming."

The agency revealed, in its New Streamlined Funding System for Adult Skills document, that it would stop paying for certain 'awards'.

An agency spokesperson said the move was being made as part of a "strategic review of the qualifications offer in consultation with the sector".

She said: "This will ensure that only those qualifications that are demanded by learners and employers and that meet the highest standards will be supported by public funding."

Qualifications with credit values of 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11 under the Qualifications and Credit Framework will not be funded from January.

Exceptions, according to agency guidance, were expected to include "very small" English and maths qualifications, as well as "other small qualifications" for students with learning difficulties or disabilities, and "those who are unemployed".

The move could result in the end of public funding for, *FE Week* understands, more than 1,600 'awards' —

including 27 NOCN courses, such as using employability skills.

Mr Hastings-Evans said: "The only action we could take would be to rewrite qualifications so they fit the 3, 6, 9 or 12 brackets, then they'd have to go to Ofqual for approval, and the agency for approval for funding.

"They could find lots of people coming up with new qualifications."

A spokesperson for the qualifications watchdog Ofqual said it was aware of the changes and had been in talks with the agency.

"The way qualifications are funded can have an impact on the market, and create particular incentives," she said.

"We are alert to this and will take action to make sure that qualifications are fit for purpose and meet the appropriate standards, with credit allocated appropriately."

The move is the second cull on qualifications in as many months.

The agency was warned in February by the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) that it risked "destabilising the system" with plans to stop paying out for nearly 2,500 qualifications that had little or no uptake.

The latest cull has drawn further criticism from FAB.

Its chief executive, Jill Lanning, said: "We and our members had no prior warning and we have sought clarification from the agency about the rationale for the change.

"We are concerned about the adverse effect it is likely to have on qualifications."

The agency spokesperson added: "We have set out a process to focus funding in 2013/14 for very short courses on qualifications that are more meaningful.

"Therefore, the qualifications that will be funded have a clear track record of demand from learners and employers."

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Edition 62

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Top #NUS election tweets:

- 

**@toni\_pearce**  
Incredibly humbled and excited to have been elected the next NUS national president. Thank you!
- 

**@JoeVinson**  
So excited to be elected the next Vice President Further Education of NUS! Thanks to all who supported me, you've been amazing!
- 

**@157lynne**  
Congratulations Toni from 157 Group delighted for you, all students, and for FE. Go girl
- 

**@CornwallCollege**  
Cornwall College SU President Joe Vinson has been elected NUS Vice President for FE! Congrats Joe! Very proud of Joe and Toni Pearce today!
- 

**@nusuk**  
And, that's the end of #nusnc13. You can read coverage watch videos and see photos here: [nusconnect.org.uk/conference](http://nusconnect.org.uk/conference) Thanks all!

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# Colleges hit with agency warnings

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Two of England's biggest colleges have been slapped with notices of concern by the Skills Funding Agency following inadequate gradings from Ofsted.

City of Liverpool College got grade fours in every one of the education watchdog's headline fields last month, just four years after it was praised as outstanding.

And, more recently, City of Bristol College fell from good to inadequate, with grade fours in all but leadership and management, where it was seen to be in need of improvement.

The Ofsted verdicts prompted the agency to act, issuing both colleges with notices of concern — the first step in a three-stage risk management process, introduced following the government's New Chances, New Challenges review. Agency funding can be withdrawn at stage three.

Ofsted said the 17,000-learner Liverpool college, formerly Liverpool Community College, had too many students turning up late for lessons — if at all.

It also said too many learners left the college, which had a turnover of £47.5m for the year ending July 31, 2011, without qualifications.

However, principal Elaine Bowker and her new senior team shared "a clear view of the college's current weak position and have communicated the urgent need for improvement", added the report.

An agency spokesperson confirmed it had issued a notice of concern to the college. A college spokesperson said: "We can confirm the agency has followed its standard process and issued a notice to improve.

"Our staff and management team are committed to building on current successes and improvements that have been implemented since the new senior leadership has been in post."

The 30,000-learner Bristol college — England's sixth biggest with a turnover of £67.5m for the year ending July 31, 2011 — was last inspected in 2010, when it achieved a good grading.

But, according to the latest Ofsted report, its teachers now paid "insufficient attention to the individual needs of learners and do not challenge learners of different abilities to achieve their potential".

However, it also paid tribute to the efforts of new leadership at the college. It said an "impressively positive cultural change, instigated through highly effective communication, is enabling staff to become more responsible and accountable for learners' outcomes".

The agency spokesperson said: "We are applying our intervention process and have issued a notice of concern.

"We will remain in conversation with the college over the next few months to ensure it restores high quality provision and to ensure that the needs of learners continue to be met."

A Bristol college spokesperson said: "The notice of concern is procedural and was fully expected."

# Careers service boosts provision

Rebecca Cooney  
[@RebeccaKConney](#)

The National Careers Service (NCS) is to launch a range of services in 12 regions and is searching for contractors to take on the work.

Tenders have been invited for an "enhanced" provision of the current service from April 1, 2014.

The announcement comes as the service, launched by former Skills Minister John Hayes, celebrates its first anniversary.

It is part of the Skills Funding Agency, whose chief executive, Kim Thorneycroft, said the service had achieved "great success" in its first year, providing advice that helped many people to get the right skills to enable them to "grow and prosper".

She said that an "enhanced" service, focused on local needs, would build on that success. "We are aiming to continue to increase the reach and impact of the service."

According to a position statement seen by FE Week, the local contracts will cover the maintenance of regional website pages, telephone facilities and community-based face-to-face services.

A national contact centre will provide personalised careers advice and refer adult customers to local telephone facilities, and an

improved national website will allow customers to store and access their careers information and provide access to local sites.

Local contractors will liaise with local enterprise partnerships and Jobcentre Plus to provide up-to-date local labour market intelligence and information for the NCS, as well as its customers, advisers and partners.

The position statement said that the agency wanted to encourage more flexible and innovative approaches to delivering careers advice, "working collaboratively with partners, reflecting the drive towards localism and growth".

Contractors will be able to bid in more than one of the 12 areas, "provided they are able to meet the detail and quality of the specification in each area for which they bid", according to the document.

Face-to-face services will be available to prisoners as part of a move to target priority groups, which also include low skilled adults, ex-offenders, people with learning difficulties, unemployed people, including those aged 18-24 not in employment, education or training, and those facing redundancy or recently redundant.

The agency's estimates suggest that during its first year the NCS has provided guidance to more than 800,000 people; 76 per cent report progress in work or learning within six months.

FE Week news in brief

## New UTCs confirmed

More than a dozen more university technical colleges (UTCs) have been announced by the government.

Five are already open, 12 will open this year, 15 next year, and a further 13 are on their way in 2015.

The 45 will take 27,000 students, aged 14 to 18, when fully operational, providing training for technicians and engineers.

See page 8 for an expert piece on UTCs

## Qualification dropped

Plans for a new ESOL for Life in the UK qualification have been thrown out.

Ofqual's three-month consultation on regulations governing foreign learners of English, which ended in December, has led to plans for the qualification being dropped.

The watchdog also said it would withdraw some regulations for ESOL for Work.

However, more conditions for ESOL International qualifications are on the way and regulation for ESOL Skills for Life will be retained.

## Swindon grade one

The second general further education college in England to achieve an outstanding Ofsted grade under a tough new inspection regime has been announced.

Swindon College, which has around 10,000 learners, had been rated as satisfactory in 2009 and inadequate in 2007.

Principal Andrew Miller said college staff and governors had "embraced the changes required to focus on our students to ensure they achieve the best they can".



Former Skills Minister John Hayes at last year's launch of the National Careers Service

To build on this, the service said it would also implement an outcome-based funding model that encouraged advisers to focus on achieving positive outcomes relating to customer satisfaction, personal career management, employment and learning."

Interested contractors must fill in a pre-qualification questionnaire on the agency Bravo e-tendering portal before May 7. Contracts will be awarded at the end of October.

# Pearce takes the top job at the NUS

Rebecca Cooney

@RebeccaKConney

The first president of the National Union of Students from an FE background said her election was an “exciting” development that showed the union had “come a long way”.

Toni Pearce, who remains in her current post of NUS vice president for FE until the new academic year, was elected with 62 per cent of the 732 votes cast at the union’s annual conference in Sheffield.

She became vice president following two years as president of the student union at Cornwall College.

Ms Pearce, who did A-levels at college, said: “It’s really exciting that the NUS and the student movement are electing people based on their policies, their record and what they can deliver, not on their background.”

“This is testament that we’ve got to a point in our organisation where it’s not about splitting our unions or our delegates into further or higher education, but about saying we are a collective movement.”

She added: “We’ve come a long way from when I first got involved in the student movement. I never imagined I would be standing on that stage, or even that there would be a

further education president.”

Ms Pearce said the change had come about partly through the union’s campaigns on Care to Learn and the 24+ learner loan, which made the union more relevant to learners in FE.

She said her FE background was “not what necessarily defines me as a candidate or as president”, and suggested that her presidency would aim to develop an inclusive union.

“It’s not just about the same people and the same issues, it’s about talking to people such as sports and activities officers and class reps in colleges . . . about what they want their education to look like and how the NUS can help them do that,” said Ms Pearce.

“It can’t be about NUS imposing policies on them — that’s not what our movement is about.”

Ms Pearce’s successor as vice president for FE, Joe Vinson, also followed in her footsteps as president of Cornwall College.

In his election speech, Mr Vinson said: “I’m not a typical FE student — none of you is, because there is no such thing.

“Year after year delegates stand on this stage and tell FE students that they care about them and then start talking about a vision of FE entirely focused on 16 to 19-year-olds. And I’m sick of it... I will fight for a support system that leaves no one behind.”



NUS office holders Toni Pearce and Joe Vinson are both past presidents of Cornwall College’s student union

He became the youngest councillor in Cornwall when he was elected, unopposed to St Agnes Parish Council at 18, and successfully campaigned at Cornwall College for free transport to college for students who would have received the education maintenance allowance.

Cornwall College’s deputy chief executive for student experience, Debbie Wilshire, said: “Toni Pearce was an excellent sabbati-



cal president, we aren’t at all surprised at her historic victory,” she said.

“Joe Vinson’s commitment at college has been first rate and he will take his own style and passion into the role.”

Labour MP Lorna Fitzsimons was the first NUS president from an FE college. She was in post two years from 1992.

However, unlike Ms Pearce, Ms Fitzsimons studied a higher education qualification.

## FE loans create shortfalls

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

Some providers are facing funding shortfalls of up to £750,000 for adults with extra needs, claims the National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS).

As part of the new 24+ advanced learner loans regime for those wanting to take up an FE course, providers were distributed £50m over two years to cover extra needs such as childcare, travel costs and extra tuition.

But many have reported less cash in their bursary allocation for 2013/14 compared with the demand they faced in the current academic year.

Association chair Jim Busher, who has written to the Skills Funding Agency with his concerns, said some providers “will need to turn away” applicants for the new FE loans because “they cannot support their childcare or additional learning support costs”.

A table of figures he shared with *FE Week* showed the shortfalls that 20 colleges were facing.

The Manchester College confirmed it was expecting a £750,000 shortfall — its 24+ bursary allocation was £250,000, although its demand for additional needs for 2012/13 was £1m. Principal Jack Carney said he was “concerned” the college would not be able to offer learners the level of support they previously had, “impacting on

their ability to participate and achieve”.

Mr Busher’s research also suggested one college in the Midlands expected a £213,000 shortfall, while another in the far north anticipated a £120,000 shortfall.

Lakes College West Cumbria, where Mr Busher heads student support services, faces a £66,000 shortfall.

“Many colleges are wrestling with this potential shortfall and the impact it could have on applicants,” he said.

“NAMSS would urge that the agency revisits the bursary allocation, if only to mitigate against a significant number of colleges asking for additional funds.”

Jerry White, director of planning and performance at City College Norwich, which faces a £75,000 deficit, told *FE Week* that the types of courses that were loans-funded were “likely to have a very disproportionate number of users who need additional support.

“Adult learners are more likely to be on big full-time courses like Access to HE,” he said. “They have disproportionate requirements for childcare and tend to come from backgrounds where they may need a lot more learner support.”

Mr White said he believed the fund “should not be ring-fenced” but should be put back with the mainstream learners’ pot.

“Then we could go between the pots if we had excess demand,” he said.

As a result of the shortfall, his college expected to “incur costs” that it couldn’t claim back.

When asked if the agency would review the bursary allocations, a spokesperson said the bursary fund had been “developed in consultation with the sector”.

She said: “The agency will work with the sector during the 2013/14 academic year to monitor the take-up of bursary funding, ensuring that as far as possible, available funding reflects demand.”

## Ofsted success leads to government support call

Chris Henwood

@Chris\_Henwood

The government has been urged to do more to promote sixth-form colleges after the sector’s second outstanding grade under Ofsted’s tough new inspection regime.

Rochdale Sixth Form College, which has around 1,000 students, got grade one rankings across the education watchdog’s headline fields following its first inspection.

“Teaching is energetic and often inspirational, and builds students’ confidence to achieve their potential,” said the report.

“Lessons start promptly with a good pace that promotes a vibrant learning environment and strong work ethic.

“Teachers use a wide range of interactive activities and skilful questioning to engage and challenge students, and progress in lessons is very good.”

The result, which follows the outstanding achieved by Brighton, Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College late last year, has prompted a call for more government focus on the sector.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges’ Association, said: “We are delighted that Ofsted has recognised the outstanding work of Rochdale Sixth Form College.

“As the most recent sixth-form college to have opened its doors, it is a great advertisement for our sector and highlights the transformative effect our colleges can have on local communities.

“While the government continues to promote the establishment of new academies and free schools with 16 to 19 provision, similar support

for new sixth-form colleges has been conspicuous by its absence,” he said.

“Rochdale shows that investing in sixth-form colleges can result in swift and positive returns.

“Our message to government is to focus on the product, not the brand — sixth-form colleges may not have the academy or free school name above the door, but they continue to outperform these new providers, and school sixth forms, on a range of measures.”

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said the government valued sixth-form colleges.

“Their record of getting large numbers of students into top universities is outstanding, and they offer fantastic value for money,” she said.

“By 2015, we will end the disparity in funding for 16 to 18-year-olds so that all school and colleges are funded at the same rate.

“The evidence is clear that academies are transforming the life chances of thousands of pupils, and free schools will do the same. Both academies and free schools are funded on a comparable basis to other state-funded schools.”

Rochdale’s outstanding grade came under the new inspection framework that was introduced in September.

It followed Ofsted’s Good Education For All consultation that ended in May and includes a reduced inspection notice period from three weeks to two days, and a potential re-inspection of providers ‘requiring improvement’ within 12 to 18 months.

Providers must also achieve outstanding in the headline field of teaching and learning to be considered for an overall grade one.



## Editor's comment

### A crude and brutal cull

The government could stop funding more than 1,600 qualifications in less than a year from now.

Finding out on page 13 of a Skills Funding Agency funding reform update, you could be forgiven for thinking this was common knowledge.

But it came as a complete surprise to providers and awarding organisations.

No consultation and no warning, it would appear — and a more than questionable rationale.

Why, for example, would removing one credit from a 10-credit qualification make it worthy of continued funding?

It can't be argued that not enough people do these qualifications as they passed the agency's volume threshold that was behind a cull two months ago.

Perhaps cynically, I would suggest this is a crude and brutal move driven by a central dictat in the name of simplification.

Yet our Skills Minister has said qualification design should be driven by the needs of learners and employers.

I fail to see how reducing choice and forcing awards to be one of only four credit values, can be good for anyone.

Nick Linford, editor

## Correction

It happens every now and again at newspapers, but it's never an easy pill for journalists to swallow.

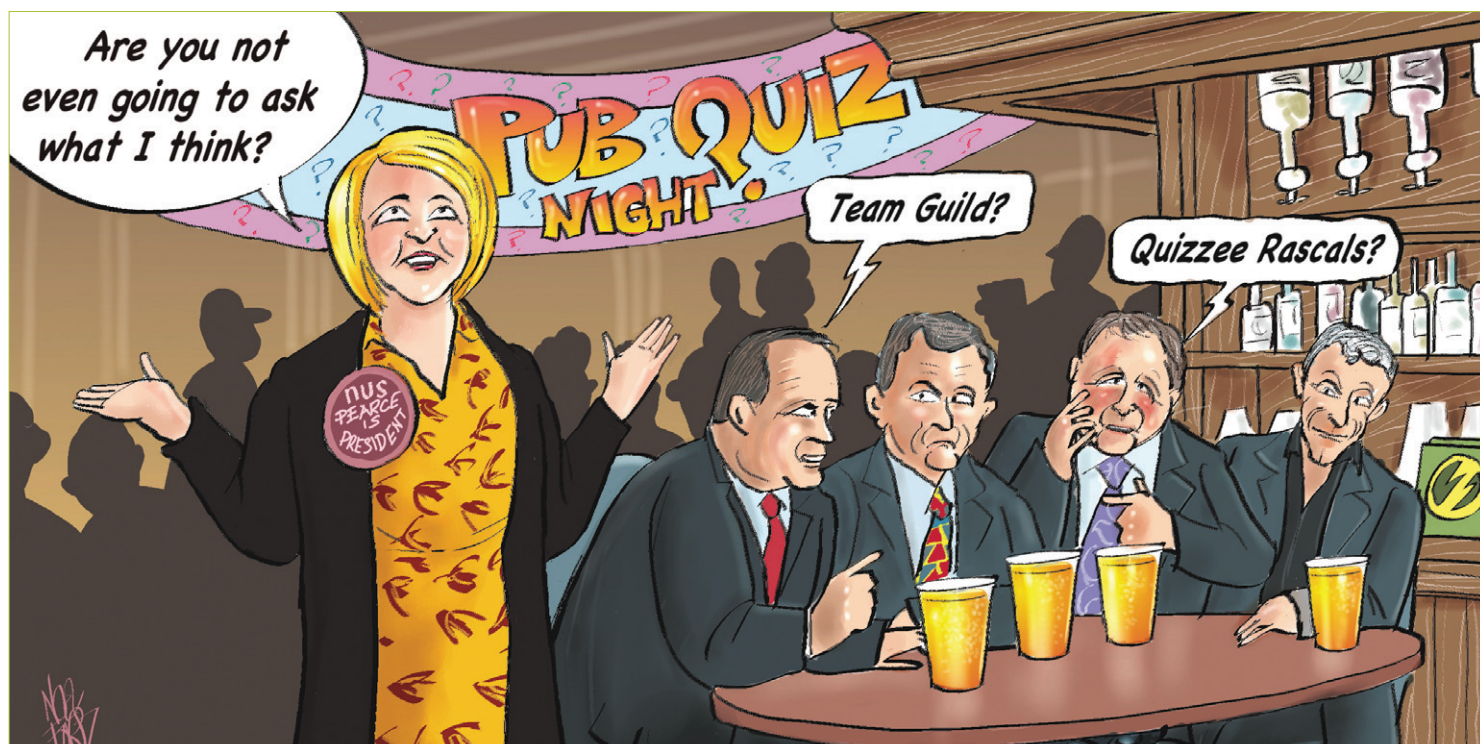
A reporter puts their blood, sweat and tears into a story and then ... the tale's credited to a colleague when it appears in print.

Thankfully, we're an easy-going bunch at *FE Week* and reporter Rebecca Cooney took such disappointment in her stride after seeing the last edition arrive hot off the press.

Her page 4 story on a report by the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning was wrongly alleged to have been penned by Chris Henwood.

### Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) with Corrections in the subject line.



## Hear our voice, the NUS tells FE Guild

Rebecca Cooney

@RebeccaKConney

The National Union of Students will continue to push for a learner presence on the board of the FE Guild, describing the lack of representation as "wrong".

President-elect Toni Pearce, who takes up the post in July, expressed anger after the revelation two weeks ago that the guild's draft implementation plans did not include a student voice on the board. She is currently the union's vice president for FE.

She said: "I don't think it's something that I'll wait until July to say is wrong — students should absolutely be represented on board of the FE Guild.

"When students are represented in higher education bodies, why should FE students not have the same parity in terms of engagement? And frankly that's what it comes down to, parity of esteem."

The draft implementation plan compares the guild, which has yet to be officially named, to the HE Academy, which does have learner representation on its board.

Current NUS president Liam Burns said he would keep talking with the guild's steering

body in his last months in the role.

"The absence of student representation would be at odds with the direction of the rest of the tertiary education sector," he said.

"An attempt to dilute the learner voice would also run counter to good practice in governing bodies in both higher education and further education, where two student governors are full members.

"In the coming weeks, we look forward to... making the case for national learner representation, and striving to ensure the student voice is at its heart."

The draft plan allocates seats on the board to the Association of Colleges, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, and the Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations.

It proposes "learners specifically be part of the wider sector engagement processes, rather than part of the governance arrangements".

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and independent chair of the steering group, said that how learner voices were heard would be part of the next phase of the guild's development.

"The consensus in the steering group has always been that the guild must and will

commit to engaging with and responding to the views of learners," he said.

"I am looking forward to continuing to work with the NUS and others to agree how best we consult and engage with learners and discussing the priorities for the guild."

The guild will be funded by a direct grant from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) for its first two years.

A BIS spokesperson said the establishment of a sector-led guild was central to placing learners at the heart of government reforms of the education and skills sector.

The spokesperson added: "Rightly, it is for the guild to decide how best to engage all stakeholders, including learners, in the ongoing development of its work."

Christine Doubleday, deputy executive director of the 157 Group, said the group recognised the importance of the guild and welcomed the debate the implementation plan had stimulated.

She added: "The 157 Group is working within the steering group to ensure broad representation and responsiveness... and will seek to ensure that any views expressed in the consultation are taken on board by the steering group."

Jayne Stigger, FE Expert, page 8

## Comment

### 'Inadequate' grading triggers government funding threat

It is very important to reflect on any feedback from sector scrutiny, but it is equally important not to allow one narrative to dominate.

All story tellers have agendas & particular perspectives. I work in the City of Liverpool College and we've been subject to several external inspections in the past year or so (relating to HE, research-engaged practice & equality from a national disability organisation).

All of these results were broadly "outstanding", most certainly "good" at least

in relation to Ofsted's deeply problematic grading. Some sense of perspective please colleagues.

Joel Petrie

### Scrabble to rename the FE Guild

FE for so many years has been linked to colleges (and at one time was used to actively separate colleges from training provision) that no matter how much branding/rebranding is done FE will always be synonymous with colleges only.

Time for real change and not tinkering at the edges.

Paul Allford

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FE Week profile

# John Bolt ~ his story

Eleanor Radford  
@EleanorRadford

The funding guru talks to FE Week

It's not an easy job getting audiences to master complex financial concepts. And you don't normally expect to cross wit with funding systems.

But as John Bolt hangs up his calculator and settles into retirement, the FE funding guru reflects on a career that he believes worked best laced with humour.

"They liked the jokes," says the former teacher who made his name developing software and speaking at conferences all over the UK and the US.

"I used humour because when you're representing the government people are always going to take a pop at you — it happened only once to me.

"Out of the several hundred events I did, to only get that once was my real highlight."

Bolt, 66, started his working life as a teacher, becoming an assistant director at the Learning Skills Council (predecessor to the Skills Funding Agency).

His last task before retirement was to advise the agency on its new FE funding system, due to go live later this year.

The Bristol-born chemistry graduate and Bristol Rovers fan admits that he "always wanted to be seen. I wanted to be out there, speaking at events."

He adds: "If people read things in print they might look negatively at what it might mean, but in person you have the chance to discuss it and take on queries, listen to objections.

I like the fact that the sector appreciated it."

After being invited to speak at conferences on behalf of the Association of Institutional Research, Bolt then held court from New Orleans to Chicago, Boston to Toronto — even Orlando, where he hosted gigs at lavish Disney World hotels.

"In America these were huge events over four days with up to 2,000 delegates," he recalls.

"They liked the British — they could take the humour."

The self-confessed workaholic has already tried to retire twice, but has always been persuaded to start something new, most recently consulting for accountancy giant KPMG, which kept him doing workshops for the Association of Colleges.

The association honoured him in 2008 with a lifetime achievement award for services to FE.

Bolt, now based in Coventry, says his eureka moment, which "made his career," came when he was working as a senior IT lecturer at Coventry Technical College in the early 1980s.

"We were teaching managers of big firms how to use computers for planning and a new principal came along and changed my world,"

he says.

"He wanted a new system for collecting data and told me to put my money where my mouth was.

"I was upset at first and didn't know where to begin, but I came up with an idea and it made my career."

Bolt's creation — a system that collected figures from student registers — put him at the cutting edge of data use and he saw a revolution in the way information could be used.

His software saved the college £60,000 in its first year and went on to be sold to 60 colleges around the country.

"We set up a college company with 16 staff and an annual turnover of £1m," says Bolt, (who in his youth shared a Cotham Grammar classroom with Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers).

"The information exposed a series of things — good and bad — and the unions were touchy.

"Colleges are now funded based on data, but that came 20 years after.

"People complain data is too complicated to collect, but then as soon as they don't have the information, they say they need it."

Overcoming hurdles when it comes to maths is nothing new.

"When I first met civil servants the mood was they were all brilliant at English, but maths was something they did at school," he says.

"They weren't really interested in maths and were sometimes critical of approaches I would take...some found my funding formulas too difficult to deal with. They felt the population as a whole would be bamboozled — basically by GCSE maths."

He adds: "I think as a nation we're getting worse at maths.

"In international comparisons 10 years ago, British 10-year-olds were number two at maths and English; we're now 15th."

Bolt's software was seen as "the lead" and "praised by the EU", but eventually the company was sold.

He then had what he describes a "stroke of luck" when, in 1993, FE colleges were incorporated and funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

The body set up its head office just half a mile from where he was working as director of management information systems at City College Birmingham, an opportunity the number cruncher jumped at.



"I immediately made contact and became friends with the people who worked there," he says. "I became part of their working groups, which meant you could influence what the council was going to do — you had inside knowledge. It was worth the time spent away from the college, which they accepted."

The investment paid off and in 2000 Bolt's "dream job" came up as technical lead on funding systems for the FEFC, soon to become the Learning Skills Council.

"I was very pleased to become part of such a strong team," says Bolt, adding that the role allowed him to become the public face he'd "always wanted to be".

"I spent eight years leading a team through various iterations of changes to the funding formula, met with ministers and together we worked towards simplification — a term I've always hated.

"We ran events that were often massively oversubscribed.

"We ran regional workshops, but they proved really expensive so we teamed up with the AoC. This meant we could charge, which the sector didn't like.

"These workshops led to an invitation to tour the US.

He says he was about to leave the LSC six years ago, but was persuaded to stay on part-time. Approaching his second retirement, he was poached by KPMG.

"They have a strong education arm and encouraged the training events, still held through the AoC — so KPMG were charging the association for my time," he says.

"Then about a year ago I was invited by the agency to help them as they were designing a new funding system, but through KPMG."

As he apprehensively takes on retirement, he says he is looking forward to spending more time with wife Frances, their two sons and three grandchildren, as well as watching more cricket and reading books that are not about FE.

As he bows out after 40 years, what are his final thoughts on the sector?

"It is incredibly resilient with all the changes it constantly faces," he reflects.

"They would say colleges have been here for 100 years or more and there have been numerous changes — but they're still there."

It's a personal thing

**What's your favourite book?**  
Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

**What did you want to be when you were younger?**  
To score a century playing cricket for England

**What do you do to switch off from work?**  
Take photographs and watch cricket

**If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?**  
Albert Einstein for serious discussion and Julie Walters to lighten the evening

**What would your super power be?**  
To live for a long time and retain my health



## FE Week Advertorial

# NOCN partnership to develop training

**Apprenticeships will help to fill the gap created as workers with civil engineering skills retire, writes Graham Hasting-Evans**

Traditionally formal apprenticeships have by-passed civil engineering — until now.

But all that is changing as the construction industry faces up to a ticking time bomb caused by a skills shortage and an aging workforce.

Make no mistake; the UK construction industry plays an important part in the country's wealth making, now needed more than ever with the loss of our triple-A rating.

It's true to say that the industry is one of the few bright spots on the UK economy's horizon at the moment. Figures for the end of last year from the Office for National Statistics show commercial building, especially in London, has increased.

What's more, two years ago the UK construction industry's Gross Value Add (GVA) was £89.5 bn, some 6.7 per cent of total GVA.

The industry is also a major player when it comes to employment. In March last year there were 2.04 million workforce jobs in the UK construction industry, accounting for 6.4 per cent of all workforce jobs.

And as well as being one of our major sectors in the UK, the construction industry has also been a major exporter for nearly a century.

However, there are two distinct parts to the industry — 'building' and 'civil engineering'.

Building is probably the one most people readily identify with, with its bricklayer, plasterers, electricians etc. Apprenticeships in these skills have a long tradition — hence their industry nickname which refers to them as 'biblical skills'.

However the civil engineering part is equally as significant.

Civil engineering is the part that constructs roads/motorways, bridges, streetlights, railways, airports, waterways, posts/docks, power station, industrial complexes, water supply and sewage facilities.

They form some of the largest investment projects.

Not surprisingly the skills for civil engineering construction have also been around for a long time — remember the Romans used reinforced concrete centuries before it came back into use in Europe.

But a demographic time-bomb is about to be triggered. Many people who have civil engineering skills will be retiring, which means there is a looming skills gap.

The problem is that although the skills have been around for a long time there hasn't been a history of formal apprenticeships in the way there has in 'building'.

But now all that is changing.

Formal apprenticeships are now being developed to cover the major civil engineering skills sets, such as plant operations, concreting, steel-fixing and formwork — thanks in no small part to what we've been doing here at NOCN.

Naturally the apprenticeship frameworks include the 'work based' and 'knowledge based' qualifications.

Civil engineering projects are generally 'heavy engineering' and therefore people have to be trained and developed in this type of environment.

The training provision, tutors and therefore facilities, are 'specialist' and, to be successful they also need to embrace employers' requirements.

As far back as February 2010 the then Rolls-Royce chief, Sir John Rose, said too few British students were studying engineering and science in the UK, hampering efforts to revive industry.

So there's no argument that what the employer needs must be at the heart of the training, but to get the best training and qualifications needs partnership working.

NOCN has found this is best achieved by working directly with the employers (the civil engineering companies), specialist and skills training providers and the Sector Skills Council for Construction Skills (SSC).

Our approach is one which is innovative, utilising the flexibility of the Qualifications and



Credit Framework to best effect, not only for the younger apprentices coming into the construction industry but for the essential upskilling of those who are still in the workforce.

We believe that this is an exciting period of change, which can bring about a major improvement in the skills within the industry; this can only be successfully achieved by employers, training organisations, the SSC and the awarding organisation working together in a joint team.

*Graham Hasting-Evans, managing director, National Open College Network, is working with civil engineering companies and training providers on this initiative*

T R I B A L

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We look forward to welcoming you!





## FE Week Experts

# Students must have place at the top table

The proposed guild cannot claim to speak for the sector unless its board represents everyone in FE — and that includes learners, says Jayne Stigger

Learners put up with a lot from us; the chocolate bar and packet of crisps they signed up for is now a tuna wrap with avocado salsa on the side. FE is leaner and healthier. Why? Since 2009 colleges have listened to and involved learners in their decision-making.

The view of our customers has strengthened us, improved our culture, and supported quality assurance via reciprocal learning to put us in a stronger position to become 'outstanding'.

They are our raison d'être. Developing learners who are empowered through participation in their environment to take on challenges and lead roles in every aspect of FE life — from parking, menus, environmental issues, campus redesigns, travel subsidies, staff appointments, community campaigns — gives them an enriched, more rounded learning experience and provides us with a clear line of communication to our customers and their needs.

**"If we must have a guild, it must be inclusive; it cannot represent FE unless it represents the whole of FE"**

Every good college I have worked in has learners on its governing body, with the learner voice firmly embedded into its culture.

The new FE Guild has said that students will not be invited on to the main board but will be in one of the steering groups to be consulted 'when necessary'. How often will they be consulted? In draft three of the proposals it says: "Learner Voice is not really consistent with the draft purpose and function of an FE Guild as discussed... at the first steering group meeting". Learners will be lucky to whisper once a year.

The Association of Colleges argues that there are better ways of engaging learners; I



disagree. This is not about methods of collection but the value placed upon the view. The board is the heart and head of an organisation, the top table at a wedding.

Students must not be relegated to the status of a guest who receives an occasional wave and a bowl of cold soup at the back of the room.

Learner views cannot be 'cherry-picked' when a positive comment is required. Without constant, honest critique by our customers, we are in danger of drifting into being controlled by a 'Prozac' guild whose leaders believe their own narrative that everything is going well, discouraging followers from raising problems or admitting mistakes.

We have no desire to return to that era.

As with any other new governor, they will need support to take up the role. I've trained learners to understand the workings of a board (roles, responsibilities, budgets, forecasting, and confidentiality) so that they can be effective members, bringing a fresh and non-politicised view of the college.

They thrive on it. I have never seen a conference, survey or feedback on learners' views that hasn't improved an aspect of a college in some way; from small, simple daily workings to innovative and inspirational ways of doing things.

The board of the proposed guild should have four student members; one from each grade of college, geographically and socially diverse to reflect the true state of FE. Ask a learner and you'll get a relevant answer.

If we must have a guild, it must be inclusive; it cannot represent FE unless it represents the whole of FE. The learner is the heart of FE and always will be, no matter the government policy, political direction, funding stream, focus or method of delivery of the day.

We value our learners; their voice, their input. If the guild cannot, it is not and never will be, 'our' guild.

*Jayne Stigger, excellence and innovations manager at Basingstoke College of Technology*

# UTCs: just what the local employers ordered

The Government might say it supports university technical colleges, but it needs to take heed of criticisms of its planned curriculum reform and removal of many vocational qualifications from school league tables, says Charles Parker

Ask 14-year-olds what they think about having a longer school day and fewer school holidays and their answer is likely to be, at best, doubtful.

However, ask the same 14-year-olds what they think about attending a school where they'd spend at least two days a week doing something practical, as well as having no homework (this is completed within the longer school day) and you'd probably find they were more interested.

University technical colleges (UTCs) are a new style of school, open to pupils from 14 to 18, with an emphasis on providing a rounded, technical education. The concept was developed about five years ago by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust as a direct response to repeated demands from industry for an increased number of well-educated and high status technicians and engineers. We have some serious skills gaps in the UK and UTCs are one way in which we can help address this issue.

Both a university and industry sponsor are required to set up and govern a UTC. This ensures that the skills taught meet the needs of the local employers, and that the level of education is as high as it can possibly be. Plus, most UTCs have strong and active support from FE colleges, and some have links with independent training providers. This offers students a high quality, rounded, technical education that can lead to apprenticeships, foundation and higher degrees.

Late last month the government announced the approval of another 13 UTCs to open in 2015, which will bring the total to 45 across the country, eventually providing education for more than 27,000 students. This demonstrates continuing support from the Department for Education and positive recognition that the UTC concept is a step forward in the provision of technical education for young people.

Judging by the results from the JCB Academy in Staffordshire, UTCs are set to be hugely successful. As well as an 88 per cent pass rate in GCSE maths and outstanding results in the engineering diploma, every leaver went on to further or higher education, apprenticeship or employment.

We welcome Education Secretary Michael Gove's support for UTCs. It is surely a positive thing that the government is encouraging the development of schools that fit the needs of employers within local communities.

However, we have some concerns about some aspects of the government's wider reforms. For example, the draft curriculum for design and technology says almost nothing



about modern technology. It is vital for children to be excited and inspired by the innovations that mark out the economy of today and tomorrow — a point we will make clear in our response to the current consultation.

**"Changes to league tables have led to the removal of many vocationally-led subjects from the curriculum"**

Second, the decision to remove more than 90 per cent of vocational qualifications from school league tables could have some unintended consequences. For UTCs, it is odd — bordering on perverse — to treat the principal learning qualification in engineering as equivalent to a single GCSE.

And as research by our sister organisation, the Edge Foundation, suggests, changes to league tables have led to the removal of many vocationally-led subjects from the curriculum in many mainstream schools and academies.

This underlines the importance of UTCs. They provide young people with the opportunity to pursue an interesting and worthwhile career, while providing employers with the skilled workforce they require. This is surely a win-win.

*Charles Parker, chief executive of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust*



## FE Week Experts

# Why I'm one of the lucky ones

Careers advisers too often ignore apprenticeships in professions such as accountancy and try to convince students that university is the only answer, says Alison Ryder

Let's be honest, most teenagers don't think too much about their future while they're at school.

It wouldn't surprise me if half of them pursue a career simply because their parents told them to. And the other half follow the crowd and society's expectation and go to university.

I studied hard at school and was delighted when I got straight As in my GCSEs. It opened the door to a huge range of A-level subject choices.

In retrospect, I should have taken some careers advice at this stage, but I didn't. My ever-supportive parents told me to do whatever made me happy so I studied art, photography, politics and philosophy.

Even though I enjoyed these subjects, it soon became apparent that they didn't lend themselves easily to a job unless I wanted to become a politician or artist — and, let's face it, there aren't too many of those jobs going.

And so I decided that after A-levels I would

get a proper job.

Armed with this new sense of purpose I booked an appointment with the school careers adviser to discuss apprenticeships, but to my frustration they only wanted to convince me to go to university.

The conversation went along the lines:

Me: "I like the idea of apprenticeships. Are there any available for academic-type subjects rather than practical skills?"

Careers adviser: "No, apprenticeships tend to be for jobs like hairdressing and bricklaying."

Is there something wrong with this picture?

Each week in school assembly I would be on the 'name and shame' list of people who had not completed their UCAS application, despite explaining numerous times that I had no intention of applying for university.

It was just by chance that I stumbled upon an apprenticeship with a local accountancy firm . . . and I'll be forever glad that I did.

Five years on, and now 24, I'm a chartered certified accountant having studied through AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians).

All my training was paid for by my previous employer, I have been earning a salary, gaining experience and am debt-free.

Shortly after qualifying last summer, I landed a great job as an audit supervisor at Baker Tilly, one of the top 10 accountancy firms.

I visit interesting and often well-known companies across the country and find out about their businesses.

I also supervise new trainees and take them out to clients with me.

I'm one of the lucky ones. I stumbled across the perfect solution for me and luckily I hadn't committed to a degree that was going to leave me in £27,000 debt and with no certainty of a job at the end.

Recently I visited my old school to represent Baker Tilly at a careers' fair. I walked up to the stand promoting apprenticeships and was amazed to find that the representative knew nothing of accountancy apprenticeships.

It angered me that the quality of the careers advice hadn't improved in five years.

Students deserve to know that university is not their only option — and now more than ever with the rising cost of course fees.

But it's best to look on the bright side — at least there was an apprenticeship stand to begin with. That's a start.

*Alison Ryder, audit supervisor at Baker Tilly*



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"What I am doing differently as a result is managing staff more effectively, managing workload better and I am more able to tackle contentious issues"

Jenny Smith, Programme Leader - Care Studies, Boston College

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# FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by **empra**

## PE student hopes to make a big splash



Courtney Dean, 18, hopes to represent the UK in the water polo world championships

An 18-year-old Cheshire student is hoping to represent the UK in the world water polo championships later this year.

Courtney Dean, an A2 PE student at Priestley College, is working with national coaches towards her goal of making the under-20s squad in the international competition in August.

She started playing as an eight-year-old after her brother asked her to fill in for his team.

“I enjoyed swimming, but I am more of a

team player so it really suited me,” she said.

She has already competed in championships across Europe, including Russia where she had a taste of the celebrity life.

“It is one of their main sports — everybody was asking for our autographs,” she said.

Nigel Howells, Priestley’s head of sport, said: “It is great to hear about Courtney’s success, which is well deserved given her dedication to the sport.”

## Ploughing on, despite the weather



Lewis Humphrey, 17, takes his turn in the ploughing relay

West Country farm mechanisation students dug deep when they completed a 24-hour ploughing marathon in challenging weather conditions.

The 14 first-year students from Wiltshire College worked in shifts throughout the day and night to plough 184 acres and raise funds for Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Cancer Research UK. Agricultural engineering trainer Fred Gwinnett, who helped to

organise the event, praised their teamwork.

“This is the first real challenge that the students have undertaken and I was very pleased with how they performed,” he said.

“The conditions slightly hampered them – they weren’t able to work some of the fields as the ploughs just wouldn’t have gone through them.”

This year’s challenge — the 16th — is expected to raise £500.



Robin Ferguson, 22, and Emily Gray, 21 with 2011 WorldSkills retail merchandising gold medal winner Kirsty Hoadley, who now works for Selfridges and presented the medals

## Derwen College students sell it to the judges

Specialist colleges have launched their own national skills contest with two Shropshire students taking top prize in the national finals of the ‘Display your wares’ retail competition.

Derwen College retail students Robin Ferguson, 22, and Emily Gray, 21, impressed industry experts from The White Room, The Co-operative Food and Selfridges with their flair at the launch of an inclusive skills competition backed by Natspec, the

membership body for specialist colleges.

The competitions are designed to allow students with disabilities to demonstrate their skills, passions and work-readiness.

The body’s chief executive, Alison Boulton, said: “We felt it was time for students from independent specialist colleges to be able to take part in vocational competitions as they are such a good way to prepare for work and independent living. They are also great fun!”



Lauren Thornhill, 20, meets a peacock

## Learners get a bird’s eye view

MidKent College students got involved with wing clipping, hoof trimming and ear tagging when they went behind the scenes at a farm park.

Animal management students also learned how to herd and vaccinate sheep, and muck out cattle at Farming World near Faversham, which is closed to the public during its off-season.

Jessica Randall, 18, from Northfleet, said: “I got to do things I wouldn’t have been able to if I went as a member of the public.

“My favourite farm animals are pigs so I really enjoyed feeding them and rubbing louse powder on to them. I also had a good time visiting the birds of prey.”

Lecturer Gemma Claxton, who organised the trip, said: “This was a real hands-on experience for the students. It was great to see them build their confidence while applying their theory lessons to the real world.”

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# Staff and students pay tribute to tutor who 'knows his craft'

**Charlie Carter joined Newham College in 1972. Forty years on and he's retiring (for the second time). Rebecca Cooney reports**

An A-level maths tutor in East London has retired after 40 years in the same college. Charlie Carter, 71, from Wanstead, said goodbye to staff and students at a special event at Newham College, where he has taught since 1972.

Mr Carter, who estimated that he must have tutored around 4,000 students during his career, said three things had helped to make his long service enjoyable.

"First, I like A-level maths — you have to like your subject — and I've been very lucky with my students and my immediate colleagues in the staff room," he said.

"Those things made the difference; that's why I stayed so long: I really like the place."

At the farewell event, his colleagues praised his ability to encourage students.

Campus executive director, Conchita Henry told him: "You're someone who knows his craft. The result of your last year was wonderful with a 100 per cent pass rate. Students said they got through their A-levels because of you."

She thanked him on behalf of all the students and staff who had relied on him and said she

was sorry the college would no longer have him.

"Tutors should have dedication and skills but what Charlie has is out of this world. No one can remember you having a day off since you started here."

His dedication was so strong that staff recalled that he once turned up after a lorry had knocked him off his bike en route.

Mr Carter said: "I was a keen teacher — I enjoyed teaching, therefore I had a good attendance record."

"Whatever happened, I felt a responsibility to get there. The students were going to turn up and I felt bad if I didn't."

Staff also remembered three former students inspired by him who had nicknamed themselves 'Charlie's angels'.

Former student Lamon French, 20, wished Mr Carter a happy retirement and thanked him for helping him to go on to study economics at the University of East Anglia.

"I came to Newham with a C in maths but wanted to go to university. It was down to Charlie's support that I got an A and did that," said Mr French.

Mr Carter first 'retired' in 2008, aged 66, but continued to teach part-time, doing "0.6 of the same job", as he put it, until this year.

He has seen a number of changes in teaching since arriving at what was then East Ham College of Technology.

He said: "We had no photocopiers then, so we had to handwrite handouts on a carbon backing and try to duplicate them. It was crude, slow



From left: former student, Lamon French, 20, Charlie Carter and director Conchita Henry at the event to thank Charlie for his service

and hard work — and it didn't last long. You had to do it again the next year and the next."

Although the internet and smartboards had made a difference, he said, teaching styles had also changed.

"There's more of an interest in the individual rather than the whole class, so teaching techniques have changed a lot. They're more effective now," said Mr Carter.

"As an A-level teacher you're given more information. At that time the marking schemes

were all top secret; now they're all public knowledge and there's loads of past papers on the internet. There's much more in the way of resources."

He said that he planned to spend more time reading, gardening on his allotment and "taking it easy".

"I have been blessed to have worked here for so long and I thank all my former students and colleagues for the support and friendship they have shown me," added Mr Carter.

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# FE Week campus round-up

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Celebrity hairstylist Vas Karpetas with Sheffield College A-level student Alicia Irvine, 17, and aviation student Elize Miezane, 16, who were models for his demonstration

## Right at the cutting edge in Sheffield

London hairstylist Vas Karpetas has worked with celebrities such as Kiera Knightley, Jude Law — and The Sheffield College students.

He used the students as models when he was invited in to demonstrate the latest on-trend styles.

Vas said: “There are so many different career options within hairdressing, including editorial work, fashion, film and television and the theatre as well as working in salons.

“I explained that the most important thing is to have a go at new ideas, and that it’s OK to make mistakes because you learn from them.”

The event was held as part of the college’s Industry Week, which offered specialists the chance to showcase their skills in barbering, hairdressing, bamboo massage, eyebrow threading, hair extensions, make-up and Afro-Caribbean hairdressing.

Principal Julie Byrne said the college was “delighted” by Vas’s “inspirational” visit.

## Hairdressing student earns her stripes

Learners in south east Wales produced out of this world designs inspired by space and films for a spectacular live hair and make-up show.

Hairdressing students at Coleg Gwent let their imagination run wild with styles inspired by the silver screen, while theatrical make-up students took their designs from outer space.

Level three hairdressing student Sophie Gill, 18, won first place with zebra themed hair and make-up inspired by the film Madagascar, with Claire Hulett, 31, coming second with her Willy Wonka look, complete with pic’n’mix laden hair.

First place in the theatrical make-up category was won by 19-year-old Jody Amner’s intergalactic angel with silver body paint that took seven hours to apply.

Coleg Gwent’s head of school for services to people, Helen Lawless, said: “This was a fantastic creative effort from a whole range of students.

“Everyone can be really proud of what they’ve achieved; it was a great event that enabled students to demonstrate their skill and talent.”



Zebra-themed hair and make-up inspired by the film Madagascar, designed by Sophie Gill and modelled by Jemma Cox, won first place

## Comedian’s visit adds up to a bit of fun



Matt Parker entertaining students at Weston College

Comedian Matt Parker recently popped into Weston College to show around 90 A-level students that maths doesn’t always have to be serious.

The number-crunching funnyman demonstrated how numbers were used in a typical episode of The Simpsons, and explained how maths was used in data encryption on websites such as Facebook.

Australian-born Matt, who has made a

name for himself through YouTube videos and radio appearances, is a qualified teacher working in London.

Weston maths lecturer Ryan Aves, who organised the event, said: “Matt is very popular on the comedy circuit so it was great to have him along to show off his skills.

“His material is funny and thought-provoking, and he was a big hit with the students.”

## Hull College in a league of their own



Dean Stratford, 21, who could be on his way to becoming plumber of the year

An apprentice plumber proved his ambition to be ‘Plumber of the Year’ was no pipe dream when he won the South West regional heat.

Dean Stratford, 21, who is studying a level two apprenticeship at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College while working for DW Dunn Ltd, beat 11 other hopefuls to compete in the national finals next month.

Dean, who is from South Cerney, said: “I

found the skills I have learnt both on the job and at college meant the task in the competition was second nature to me. I can’t wait for the next round.”

He hopes to go on to complete a level three apprenticeship.

Tutor Tony Rainford said: “Dean has a natural ability for all things mechanical,... and he approached the competition with such a good attitude. Excellent work Dean.”

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Alice Powell cuts the ribbon with students Callum Benson, 18, principal Simon Andrews and Adam Swindells-Wright, 18

## Workshops move up a gear at Macclesfield

Rising motor racing star Alice Powell opened new automotive training workshops at Macclesfield College by cutting a ribbon held between two engines.

In a converted light industry unit, the new facilities include four ramps, new engines, classrooms and industry standard tools and equipment.

Alice Powell said: "This is fantastic — if

I had had facilities like this when I was younger, I would've been over the moon."

She said that motorsport in future would look to students and apprentices trained "in workshops like this".

"It is so important to have the support of good engineers and mechanics. Everything you see in the industry, it all started here in workshops," she said.

## Mina puts another brick in the wall

Learners in London built up their skills by taking part in competitions and giving demonstrations to hundreds of visitors at their annual industry event.

More than 300 construction, engineering, and motor vehicles students at the College of North West London competed in 16 different challenges using skills such as carpentry, electronics, motor vehicle mechanics, refrigeration and air conditioning, welding and bricklaying.

Mina Salman, 17, from Kingsbury and studying a level two diploma in construction, competed in the bricklaying challenge.

She said: "I'm taking this course because I want to become a civil engineer.

"I only started here in September and we've already learnt about how buildings work, how to choose materials and environmental impacts."

Staff joined in too with principal Vicki Fagg trying her hand at making a piece of brakepipe.

Level two light vehicle maintenance student Jordan Halfhide, 17, from Kilburn, said she did "a pretty good job" but that she told him she wouldn't like the responsibility of making the brake pipes for someone's car!



Mina Salman laying down her skills in the bricklaying competition

## Norton Radstock's finest gel in contest

Young hairdressers in Somerset produced a hair-raising collection of styles for Norton Radstock College's annual competition.

They took part in a variety of sections and chose themes ranging from 'vintage burlesque' to 'tropical paradise' in the creative avant-garde/fantasy section.

Chair of the judges and salon owner Scott Green said: "It has been very challenging for us as the standard has been exceptionally high."

Siobhan Hillman, 23, from Midsomer Norton, was the unanimous choice as outstanding student of the year after she took first place for the total look colour enhancement section and the second slot in avant-garde/fantasy with a masquerade look inspired by her giant African snails.

Jayne Withers, senior curriculum leader for hair, beauty and photography, said: "I have been impressed by the quality of what has been created. It is a challenge for the students and it pushes them, but they have produced some stunning work."



Siobhan Hillman, 23, and her snail-inspired masquerade look modelled by former level three hairdressing student Sarah Moon, 24



Students Olivia Millward and Holly Pearson on the sleep-out

## Sleep-out in icy weather raises funds for Crisis

A sponsored sleep-out in a Hampshire college raised more than £1,000 for Crisis, the national charity for single homeless people.

Thirty students and four staff at Barton Peveril College spent the night on campus outside in sub-zero temperatures with only boxes, bags and blankets for shelter.

The event was organised by the student committee.

Committee president Harry Spicer said: "No one here can imagine doing this every day.

We're well aware that our experience was a very tame version of a harsh reality and that we were fuelled by the energy and adrenalin of it all.

"I think it's given us all the ability to empathise more, but we still don't really understand what it's like to be homeless."

After packing up their cardboard village, the hardy volunteers collected donations from staff and students to boost the £1,000 already raised through sponsorship.





## FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITIES AT FIRST4SKILLS

At First4Skills we're passionate about supporting individuals and businesses to excel, by delivering the highest quality of teaching & learning leading to the achievement of nationally recognised Apprenticeship programmes at all levels for individuals. We give tangible business benefits to our clients every day.

As a result of significant growth opportunities, First4Skills are recruiting for high calibre, professional individuals who share our enthusiasm for delivering operational excellence to our customers and want to be part of a successful team!

### Head of Partnerships & Funding (National Role)

#### £50k - £60k plus great benefits

As Head of Partnerships and Funding you will provide strategic direction on the design and landscape of our future operations and delivery offering. Developing senior contacts and new funding sources, you will act as the strategic link with our business partners. You will be an innovator, creative thinker, and experienced in a similar role with sound experience in the FE and Apprenticeship sector, you will provide exciting solutions supporting our business objectives.

### Operations Manager (National Role)

#### £50k plus great benefits

Our Operations Manager will be a new talent appointment for the business, so we are seeking an enthusiastic and innovative manager with experience of setting up new curriculum and building new teams. The role will be perfect for managers looking for their next exciting role where they can lead and develop new areas for our business. Experience of curriculum development and successful management of individuals and teams is essential, but most importantly we want people who are ambitious, hungry to develop new ideas and are prepared to challenge the status quo at every level. You might be working as a senior manager in a College or with a training provider, but keen to make your own mark and create something new and innovative to the sector. A passion for learning and for Apprenticeships is a must and your leadership qualities need to shine through, we are looking for people who are future Directors with this new position.

### Business Operations Managers

#### £30k - £40k plus great benefits

As a Business Operations Manager you will be fully accountable for leading a winning team, by effectively running your business to drive customer satisfaction, growth and budget delivery. You will have a proven track record as a successful, high calibre, Operations Manager who has full P&L accountability, ideally with experience of leading a team of remote workers. As a high achiever who has a successful record of delivery and exceeding targets you will be qualified to a minimum of A level standard. You will have a high degree of autonomy and responsibility for delivering operational excellence through your team of Area Trainers.

### Area Trainers

#### £25k - £30k plus great benefits

As an Area Trainer you will provide the highest quality of teaching and learning to individuals in a work-based environment supporting the achievement of Apprenticeships from Advanced Level to Higher Level attainment. You will be a professional high achiever, with passion and commitment to helping individuals achieve their aspirations. You will have a proven track record of delivering to the highest standards and will hold appropriate qualifications including AVA/A1, Functional Skills at Level 2 and/or Key Skills at Level 3 or A level attainment. You must also have the occupational background to deliver in a selection of the following areas: Retail, Hospitality (all areas), Management, Warehouse/Logistics, Sales/Contact Centre, Business Administration, Hairdressing, Customer Service and Care.

### Area Sales Representatives

#### OTE £30k plus great benefits

To further support our growth plans as an Area Sales Representative you will be accountable for delivering sales targets within your geographical area by sourcing new companies and learners to undertake Apprenticeship programmes with us, from a small family run restaurant to national retail chain, delivering 1 to 1,000 learners or more! You will be an experienced sales professional with a track record of new business generation and field account management skills. You will have a dogged determination to be successful in all that you do; an achiever with a can do attitude and strong professional work ethic which delivers quality results.

**We want to recruit the highest quality, professional individuals who want to be part of a successful team! All our roles are for creative, passionate, innovative, focused and target driven people prepared to travel throughout their area and used to working to and achieving objectives and targets. If you are not, then you are not right for us! Use of a car is essential.**

To apply: Information on working with us and full details of all our vacancies are on our website  
[www.first4skills.com/careers-at-first4skills](http://www.first4skills.com/careers-at-first4skills)



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

[www.first4skills.com/careers-at-first4skills](http://www.first4skills.com/careers-at-first4skills)



**We're recruiting**


**nocn**  
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

**Compliance Manager  
(Based in Sheffield)****£40,000 pa**

NOCN is one of the largest awarding organisations in the UK with 4 million awards over the last 6 years and has been providing a customer-focussed qualification and accreditation service for over 25 years, based on an ethos of creating opportunities for all. This is an exciting opportunity to join a well-established and expanding organisation.

Following an internal promotion, we are seeking to appoint an experienced Compliance Manager to support the Director of Compliance and Governance and to manage the Compliance team in maintaining and monitoring quality assurance processes and procedures as they relate to business and regulatory compliance.

You will be based in our Sheffield Office, but will also liaise with our teams nationally and build relationships across the organisation. You will need excellent communication skills as well as previous experience. The ability to foster strong working relationships is invaluable in this challenging role to ensure a co-ordinated approach to all quality assurance and compliance matters.

The closing date for applications is **5pm on Friday 26th April 2013**.  
Interviews will be held on **Wednesday 1st May 2013**.

NOCN is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and seeks to recruit individuals who reflect the UK's diverse population. People from under-represented groups who are able to make a real contribution to the company and its learners are encouraged to apply for vacancies.  
More information about NOCN can be found at [www.nocn.org.uk](http://www.nocn.org.uk)

To apply, please go to [http://www.nocn.org.uk/about/jobs\\_at\\_nocn](http://www.nocn.org.uk/about/jobs_at_nocn)

Completed applications and equal opportunity forms should be submitted to:  
[sarah.whitham@nocn.org.uk](mailto:sarah.whitham@nocn.org.uk)



**Warwickshire  
College**



**Gazelle  
Colleges  
Group**

**Head of School of Arts**

Location: Warwickshire College, Leamington Spa Campus

Salary: **£46,512 - £53,717 per annum**

Reference: VS11

**Closing date Sunday 5 May 2013**

Are you teacher qualified and have a level 4 or higher qualification in a creative arts discipline?

We are seeking to appoint an aspiring and inspirational leader who anticipates future opportunity and who can promote our mind set of continuous improvement and innovation across the sector. The post holder must have significant and outstanding experience as a leader/manager and working with students within the creative industries field. They will ensure that each student has access to and receives high quality teaching and support to achieve their potential.

Apply at [warwickshire.ac.uk](http://warwickshire.ac.uk)



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**POSITIVE ABOUT  
DISABLED PEOPLE**



Deerne  
Valley | **College**

To apply for the advertised position, or find details of any other vacancies, please go to [www.dearne-coll.ac.uk](http://www.dearne-coll.ac.uk)

**Estates Manager**

Ref: HR51. £33,553 per annum. 37 hours per week.  
Permanent. 31 days' leave + 10 bank holidays.

As part of the College Leadership Team, you will be responsible on a day-to-day operational basis for the College facilities, premises and grounds plus the services provided by the Maintenance, Security and Catering teams. You will also ensure that Health & Safety legislation is met, manage capital projects for the College and act as a key holder to provide appropriate access to buildings in cases of emergency.

In addition to departmental duties, you will also need to work collaboratively with colleagues and teams across College, as part of the Leadership team, in order to support and enhance the learner experience.

Applicants should have a degree or professional qualification in Engineering/Building/Facilities/Landscape Management, or similar, a NEBOSH qualification, or similar, and project management experience.

All posts are subjected to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.

Closing date for applications:  
Thursday 2nd May 2013.

[www.dearne-coll.ac.uk](http://www.dearne-coll.ac.uk)



**POSITIVE ABOUT  
DISABLED PEOPLE**



**interim4fe**  
interim & permanent staffing for education

**A new approach to interim and project support  
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Education needs experienced and motivated people of all ages, across all disciplines.

If you fit this description, register with **interim4fe**, the interim staffing register that brings candidate information on-line and puts you in charge of the data you present to potential employers.

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They will offer interim and project support full-time or part-time, and in some cases fill permanent roles.

We notify all candidates of all assignment opportunities covering Curriculum, Finance, MIS, HR and more.

Register with [www.interim4fe.com](http://www.interim4fe.com) today.

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# A fresh approach to securing English and maths skills

## FREE training events – now available

A number of **free** events are being held across the country to help you with the delivery of the newly accredited Cambridge Progression suite of qualifications.

Designed for students aged 16+ and fills the gap left by the ending of Basic Skills. The new qualifications support core skills and knowledge for 16+ learning, with simple assessment and a framework of bite-sized, credit-based units.

To find out more about the events and to book, visit [www.ocreventbooker.org.uk](http://www.ocreventbooker.org.uk) using course code **AFPRAA**.

[ocr.org.uk/progression](http://ocr.org.uk/progression)



### FE Week Sudoku challenge

			2	1			8	
5		2	4		3			
					7		6	
	2	7					5	6
9								2
6	5					1	9	
	9		1					
			5		4	9		8
	3			8	6			

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

				4	2	8		
			1			9		
9			7					2
3		8					2	5
	6						3	
2	4					6		9
7					1			6
		5			4			
		3	2	5				

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

### Last Week's solutions

5	3	7	8	2	1	9	4	6
4	1	8	3	6	9	2	5	7
9	2	6	7	5	4	1	3	8
2	6	3	9	7	5	4	8	1
1	9	4	2	8	3	7	6	5
7	8	5	4	1	6	3	9	2
6	7	9	1	3	8	5	2	4
8	4	1	5	9	2	6	7	3
3	5	2	6	4	7	8	1	9

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

9	8	6	4	1	3	5	7	2
2	3	5	7	8	9	6	1	4
1	7	4	6	5	2	9	3	8
8	4	1	9	3	6	7	2	5
3	9	2	8	7	5	4	6	1
5	6	7	1	2	4	3	8	9
7	2	9	3	4	8	1	5	6
4	1	8	5	6	7	2	9	3
6	5	3	2	9	1	8	4	7

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

### FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



*"Mostly this week I've been teaching baby Tom how to ride a bike"*

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter [@daniellinford](https://twitter.com/daniellinford)